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SUBJECT: JAPANESE MORNING PRESS HIGHLIGHTS 09/25/07

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#### Articles:

1) Fukuda appoints faction leaders, Ibuki, Tanigaki, Nikai, and Koga to LDP executive posts, with Machimura named chief cabinet secretary

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ASAHI (Top Play) (Excerpts)  
September 25, 2007

Newly elected Liberal Democratic Party President Yasuo Fukuda yesterday appointed Education, Science and Technology Minister Bunmei Ibuki, 69, as the party's secretary general and former Finance Minister Sadakazu Tanigaki, 62, as policy research council chairman. He also decided to keep General Council Chairman Toshihiro Nikai, 68, in his post, and named former Secretary General Makoto Koga, 67, as first chairman of the election committee under the

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direct control of the party president. Fukuda has put up a line-up strong enough to face policy debate with the opposition camp, which has control of the House of Councillors, by giving the four executive posts to the faction leaders and bringing forth Ibuki and Tanigaki, who are reputedly expert on policymaking. Fukuda has also decided to tap Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura as chief cabinet secretary in a new Fukuda cabinet to be inaugurated today.

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Fukuda initially planned to appoint Koga as General Council chairman. But since Koga himself desired to assume a post responsible for election strategy, Fukuda upgraded the post of director general of the Election Strategy Bureau to that of election committee chairman, placing it on a par with the three executive posts.

Fukuda reappointed Diet Affairs Committee Chairman Tadamori Oshima (Komura faction) and Deputy Secretary General Hiroyuki Hosoda (Machimura faction) to their respective posts.

The key party appointments were approved in an extraordinary session of the General Council yesterday.

Those appointed to the four party executive positions were all faction leaders who supported Fukuda in the party presidential race. All members of the Tanigaki and Nikai factions are said to have voted for Fukuda, but many members of the Ibuki faction cast their votes for Aso. Given this, the appointment of Ibuki as secretary general surprised a number of party members.

Secretary General Ibuki said in a press conference yesterday: "There

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is no magic for the party to immediately regain public support. We are determined to steadily implement policies and give explanations

to the people in a modest manner."

Fukuda will be named the 91st prime minister through a Diet vote today and then launch his cabinet tonight.

Changes in cabinet ministers are expected to be at a small scale because the Diet is in session. Some suggest appointing Defense Minister Komura to succeed Foreign Minister Machimura.

Some suggest Defense Minister Komura be reappointed to his post. But others propose appointing former Defense Agency Director General Shigeru Ishiba (Tsushima faction) if Komura becomes foreign minister. As a successor to Education Minister Ibuki, an idea of naming Upper House member Seiko Hashimoto (Machimura faction), who served as election campaign office head for Fukuda, is floating.

2) New LDP Secretary General Ibuki: Criticism over high amount of office expenses declared by his office; Did Fukuda determine there is no problem?

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)  
September 25, 2007

Bunmei Ibuki, who yesterday took office as the Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) secretary general, and Toshihiro Nikai, who took office as General Council chairman, came under fire for their unclear handling of political funds. New LDP President Fukuda appears to have decided to pick them, judging, based on their explanations and other information, that there would be no problem.

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A high amount of office expenses reported by Ibuki's political funds management body was pursued in the Diet session this year. The body's main office was located in the rent-free Diet Members' Office Building. Nevertheless, the body entered 33.35 million yen as office expenses for 2006. Ibuki's office explained that rents for three offices located in Tokyo and Kyoto, fees for parking lots and lease payments for PCs totaled approximately 20 million yen.

Ibuki during a press conference yesterday stressed that the body's handling of office expenses was proper in compliance with the Political Funds Control Law. He noted, "The law was revised in 1994 with the aim of making political funds control bodies handle both incoming and outgoing political funds."

It was learned that the LDP branch headed by Nikai and his supporters' association failed to report in its political funds report that its office was provided rent-free.

3) "Deterioration in my physical condition is the major reason for my resignation," says Prime Minister Abe in press conference held at hospital: Apologizes for turmoil his resignation has caused

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 1) (Full)  
September 25, 2007

Commenting on his resignation announcement, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in a press conference held on the afternoon of Sept. 24 at Keio University Hospital (Shinanomachi, Tokyo), where he is receiving treatment, apologized that his abrupt resignation has paralyzed the government. He noted, "I announced my resignation at the worst time -- shortly after making a policy speech."

Regarding the reason why he has decided to step down, Abe revealed that his health condition was the major reason, saying, "My physical condition has continued to deteriorate over the past month and I felt I have reached my limits. I concluded that I could no longer fulfill my responsibilities as prime minister."

As reasons for his decision to quit, Abe in a press conference on the 12th cited the deadlock in the continuation of the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling operation in the Indian Ocean. He did not refer to his health.

Referring to this, he explained, "I thought the prime minister

should not reveal his physical condition while in office."

Concerning reasons why he did not appoint an acting prime minister, Abe noted, "I did not do so, based on the judgment reached from the legal perspective of whether not appointing an acting prime minister would cause trouble." Regarding his future political activities, he revealed his intention to run in the next Lower House election, denying the possibility of resigning as a lawmaker. He said, "I would like to continue my efforts as a legislator."

In response to some media reports that former Secretary General Taro Aso, who ran in the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) presidential election, forced him to step down, Abe said, "There was no coup."

4) DPJ to heighten their confrontation with government with focus on consumption tax, pension issues

MAINICHI (Page 2) (Excerpts)

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September 24, 2007

Yasuo Fukuda has expressed his readiness to cooperate with the opposition. However, opposition parties, such as the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto), are set to heighten their confrontation with the government and the ruling camp, by focusing on wasteful spending of revenues from the consumption tax, pension premium funds and tax money in order to play up differences with the government and the ruling parties. They intend to press the government and the ruling bloc with the adoption in the Upper House during the extraordinary session policies proposals they made during the Upper House campaign, including a bill prohibiting the diversion of pension premium funds. They will also adopt a strategy of realizing a dissolution of the Lower House and a general election in the form of cornering the new administration.

Regarding Fukuda's call for talks with the DPJ, DPJ Secretary General Yukio Hatoyama told reporters in New Hidaka Town, Hokkaido on Sept. 23, "Mr. Fukuda's thinking may look similar to ours, but essential differences will appear sooner or later. His politics left in the hands of bureaucrats will give away. We will pursue debate on the front stage of the Diet." He took the position that voters supported the DPJ through the Upper House election not for talks with the government and the ruling parties but policies which cannot be realized unless the DPJ takes the reins of government.

The DPJ adhered to their stance of opposing the continuation of the Self-Defense Force's refueling operation in the Indian Ocean, which has in the end forced Prime Minister Abe to step down. However, since Fukuda has no intention of bulldozing his way through the Diet over the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law as Prime Minister Abe did, the party finds it difficult to pressurize Fukuda's administration over this issue.

Fukuda during the Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) presidential election advocated policies that were close to those of the DPJ, including a review of the Disabled Persons Self-Support Assistance. His campaign slogan "self-support and coexistence" was exactly the same as the DPJ's. One senior DPJ officer revealed a possible approach to show differences with Fukuda, "Since Mr. Fukuda is close to bureaucrats, he will not be able to eliminate wasteful spending of tax money. He has also referred to a possible hike in the consumption tax." To be precise, the DPJ will exercise administrative investigation rights during the current Diet session with an eye on the year-end budget compilation and appeal to the public regarding how the government and the ruling camp are forcing them to shoulder more burden by leaving wasteful spending unattended. They will also make an issue over the overall structure of the draft budget, such as the subsidy and special account systems, during next year's regular Diet session. Their strategy is to vote down the budget-related laws, thereby realizing a dissolution of the Diet and a general election.

5) Ruling coalition concerned about next Lower House election

NIKKEI (Page 3) (Full)

September 25, 2007

Concerned about the next House of Representatives election, the ruling parties have begun looking into the possibility of implementing social security measures that would be generous to the people, including a freeze on medical copayments for the elderly.

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The ruling coalition has analyzed that an increase in the residential tax, following the suspension of the fixed-rate across-the-board cut, was one of the reasons for its defeat in the July Upper House election. The ruling camp appears to have determined that its policy of calling on the public for "pain" would bring disadvantages to it in the next Lower House election.

In discussions with the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), coalition partner New Komeito demanded measures to decrease the burden on the people and socioeconomic disparities, similar to Yasuo Fukuda's campaign pledges for the LDP presidential race. It can be said that it was easy for the LDP and New Komeito to make concessions on policy measures for the medical burden on the elderly, reform of the inheritance tax for small- and mid-size companies, and shortage of doctors.

The LDP gave consideration in a way to the internal situation of the New Komeito. Since the largest opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) has called for freezing the increase in medical copayments by elderly, the New Komeito is alarmed about the possibility of the LDP and DPJ taking leadership on this issue.

New Komeito leader Akihiro Ota has said that his party will play the role of applying a brake in the ruling camp. However, in the religious sect Soka Gakkai, which is the support body of the New Komeito, a move calling for achievements in concrete policy measures has increasingly become stronger. One member said: "What Ota has said is abstract and difficult to understand."

There is a wide gap in response to the politics-money issue between the two parties. The LDP and New Komeito, in their discussion on forming a coalition government, has reached on an agreement that politicians would be required to attach receipts to their fund reports every time costing one yen or more. However since the New Komeito accepted the LDP's assertion that the contents of receipts would not be made public, there will be little change in the situation.

6) Fukuda eyes submitting new antiterrorism legislation to current Diet session; Aso wants to enact legislation in current Diet session

MAINICHI (Top Play) (Lead paragraph)  
September 22, 2007

Former Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda and Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Secretary General Taro Aso, who are now running in the LDP presidential election, attended on Friday a panel discussion at the Japan National Press Club. At the discussion, Fukuda revealed a policy of submitting to the current Diet session alternative legislation to the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law so that the Maritime Self-Defense Force would be able to continue its refueling mission in the Indian Ocean. He stated: "We have no choice but to consider new legislation. If so, we will present it to the current extraordinary session." Aso also expressed his intention that the new legislation should be enacted at least in the ongoing session. He said: "If extending the (Antiterrorism Law) is difficult, new legislation (will be needed). The legislation should be enacted at least in the present Diet session."

7) Lengthy extension of current Diet session unavoidable; Priority on passage of new antiterrorism legislation may affect budget

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compilation, next Lower House election

Former Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda and Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Secretary General Taro Aso, candidates for the ongoing LDP presidential race, clarified on Sept. 21 their policy of aiming to enact alternative legislation to the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law during the current extraordinary session of the Diet. With this, the outlook is that a lengthy extension of the extra session, which is set to run until Nov. 10, will be inevitable. The government and the LDP are considering exercising Article 59 of the Constitution that stipulates failure by the House of Councillors to take final action within 60 days after receipt of a bill passed by the House of Representatives, time in recess excepted, may be determined by the House of Representatives to constitute a rejection of the said bill by the House of Councillors. The reason for the Diet extension is that if the government submits the new legislation in early October, it would be difficult to enact it during the ongoing Diet session.

Contrary to the determination by Fukuda and Aso, however, the main opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) has expressed its opposition to the new legislation that would allow the Maritime Self-Defense Force to continue its refueling operation in the Indian Ocean. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary to extend the extra session to secure time schedule for discussions and an option for re-passage of the legislation. Article 2 of the Diet Law writes that an ordinary session shall be annually convoked in January as a rule. If follows the precedents that at least one day should be open between extra and ordinary sessions, it will be possible to extend the extra session until Jan. 29 at the longest.

Since it is allowed to extend an extra session twice, the government and LDP appear to be looking for ways to extend the session until late January, as well as to extend again after watching what action the DPJ will take, after extending once until early December.

The question is compilation of budget for next fiscal year. It is possible to compile a budget while the Diet is in session, but it takes more time than doing it while the Diet is closed as cabinet ministers have to spent time to reply questions. If the government puts priority on the enacting of the new legislation that would allow the MSDF to continue its mission in the Indian Ocean, the compilation of state budget for next fiscal might be carried over to next year.

8) In meeting with Machimura, Rice expresses hope for extension of refueling mission, reiterates consideration of abduction issue in dealing with North Korea

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 1) (Full)  
September 29, 2007

Yasunori Ishikawa, New York

Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura met United States Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in New York for about 25 minutes on the afternoon of Sept. 22. In reference to the United Nations Security Council resolution expressing appreciation for the countries participating in maritime interdiction operation (MIO) by the

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coalition of the willing in the Indian Ocean, Rice expressed her hopes for an extension of the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law (to enable the Maritime Self-Defense Force to continue its refueling mission). According to informed sources, Rice said: "The resolution is designed to clearly express the international community's perception that the continuation of the operations is necessary. I expect the resolution will help (Japan) (to extend the law)."

Machimura replied: "We are determined to make utmost efforts to extend the law while doing our best to solicit cooperation from the opposition camp."

On North Korea's nuclear weapons program, Rice reiterated that the US would give consideration to the issue of North Korea's past

abductions of Japanese nationals in determining whether it should delist North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism, remarking: "We will not sacrifice Japan-US relations." Rice and Machimura also agreed that the two countries will cooperate in the process of disabling its nuclear facilities.

Machimura also met with Afghanistan President Karzai, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, and Iranian Foreign Minister Mottaki, separately.

9) Machimura to play up Japan's utmost efforts for continued MSDF refueling operations in talks with leaders of concerned countries on sidelines of UNGA

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Abridged slightly)  
September 23, 2007

Yuichi Suzuki, New York

Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura arrived in New York on the morning of Sept. 22 (late at night of Sept. 22, Japan time) to attend the UN General Assembly. Later in the day, he is scheduled to hold separate meetings with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai, and US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. Machimura intends to extract from them positive evaluations of the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling operations in the Indian Ocean and comments requesting an extension of the MSDF mission in a bid to help persuade the major opposition Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto or DPJ), which has been opposed to the continuation of the refueling operations.

Machimura is also scheduled to announce Japan's continued grant aid to the Air Self-Defense Force's airlift operation and projects to improve infrastructure in a cabinet-level meeting on Afghanistan to be held at the UN headquarters. In the Sept. 23 cabinet-level meeting on Afghanistan, he is expected to announce Japan's determination to make utmost efforts to continue the MSDF refueling operations to root out terrorists in Afghanistan, a breeding ground for terrorists.

Earlier, the UN Security Council adopted a resolution including words of appreciation for the maritime interdiction operations, in which the MSDF is taking part. Following this, Machimura intends to obtain "seals of approval" from the UN secretary-general and the Afghanistan president for continued MSDF refueling operations to send a strong message to the general public and the DPJ.

The foreign minister, who already cast an absentee vote in the LDP

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presidential election, is scheduled to return home on the afternoon of Sept. 24.

10) Oil supplied by MSDF to US warship suspected of being diverted for use in Iraq war

ASAHI (Page 1) (Full)  
September 22, 2007

Questioned about a Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) supply ship having directly supplied fuel to the US Navy carrier Kitty Hawk on Feb. 2003 prior to the start of the Iraq war, the Ministry of Defense (MOD) at first explained in a Diet reply that the amount supplied was 200,000 gallons (760 kiloliters), but a spokesman later corrected it to fuel volume of 80,000 gallons (3030 kiloliters). It has been discovered that the carrier, after being refueled, entered the Persian Gulf and became engaged in the campaign against Iraq. The possibility is strong that fuel provided by Japan was used for a purpose other than that set by the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law.

The issue was exposed at the time when Rear Admiral William A Moffett returned to Yokosuka with the Fifth Fleet led by the flagship Kitty Hawk in May 2003. Moffett stated that the carrier had directly been refueled by an MSDF supply ship. At the time, then Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda told reporters: "The Kitty Hawk

consumes 200,000 gallons of fuel in a day. (The fuel supplied by the MSDF ship) would be consumed immediately. It is inconceivable that it was used in connection with Iraq." But his explanation clashes with the corrected figure of 800,000 gallons.

MOD at a press conference on Sept. 21 admitted the mistake, with director of international cooperation division Oka saying, "There was a mistake in inputting the data at the time it was tallied at Maritime Staff Command." He explained that the US was checking to see if the fuel was used in the Iraq war. MOD contended that the fuel was used for the anti-terror campaign since that had been an exchange of notes with the US confirming the purpose of refueling US warships was for the anti-terror campaign. But at the press conference, the spokesman added that "it could not be ascertained in detail" where the fuel was used once it was supplied.

Regarding indirect refueling, the citizens' group Peace Depot on Sept. 20 discovered from ships' logs and other documents obtained under the US Freedom of Information Act that the US supply ship Pecos was fueled by an MSDF supply ship on Feb. 25, 2003. The US Navy carrier Kitty Hawk then was refueled the same day and directly entered the Persian Gulf to participate in the Iraq war. An influential defense-policy specialist in the Liberal Democratic Party revealed to the Asahi Shimbun: "It is as the civic group said. It cannot be ruled out that the fuel supplied by Japan was possibly used in the Iraq war." Several MOD sources also confirmed, "There is concern that Japan's fuel was diverted for operations related to Iraq." The Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law, which was enacted in order to provide logistical support for the anti-terrorist operations near Afghanistan, has a provision that states the purpose of the anti-terrorist operations in the Indian Ocean is "to assist the international community in stopping and eliminating international terrorism." Iraq operations are outside the scope of this law.

11) Former US Navy captain affirms MSDF provided fuel in 2005 to his  
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ship that was engaged in the Iraq campaign

ASAHI (Top play) (Full)  
Eve., September 22, 2007

By Masato Tainaka

A US Navy captain has affirmed that a ship he once commanded was directly refueled by a Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) supply ship in the Indian Ocean when his vessel was not only engaged in anti-terrorist operations near Afghanistan, making such refueling appropriated under Japan's Anti-terrorism Special Measures Law, but also was engaged in the Iraq campaign, which would place such refueling outside the scope of the law. The former ship captain pointed out that it was common US military practice for ships to be involved in a number of operations. His testimony about the actual situation conflicts with explanations of the Japanese government that refueling operations were limited only to anti-terror purposes.

Captain Ronald Horton (47), who now commands the US Navy carrier Enterprise that is deployed to the Persian Gulf, responded recently to an interview on board his ship. According to the captain, he commanded in 2005 a US military landing craft, the USS Juneau (LDP-10), which was home-ported at the US Navy base at Sasebo. He said: "At the time, we received refueling from supply ships more frequently than now. The Japanese contribution was immeasurable." According to the captain's explanation and US Navy documents, the USS Juneau in 2005 was deployed as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) to the northern part of the Persian Gulf in order to land in Iraq US Marines who had been stationed in Okinawa. At the time, the vessel reportedly received refueling and provisions three times from an MSDF supply ship.

The USS Juneau at the time also was folded into Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), a part of war on terror that began in Oct. 2001 under the US lead to carry out maritime interdiction operations (MIO) to stop movements of terrorist group members and their weapons on the



high seas. Because the timing of these operations was never clearly differentiated, it seems to have been difficult to determine in which of the two operations the fuel from the MSDF supply ship was used.

The Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law limits the activities of the MSDF to logistical support to US warships and those of other countries carrying out anti-terror operations in the area near Afghanistan. However, with the spreading of the activities of the international terrorist group al-Qaeda from the Afghanistan area to within Iraq, the US Navy deployed simultaneously ships to cover both the anti-terror and Iraqi campaigns. The US Navy warships in the fleet of the Enterprise or other carriers are now carrying out simultaneously anti-terror and Iraqi campaigns inside the Persian Gulf. The special measures law did not assume that US warships carrying out several tactical operations in a series of marine maneuvers would be serviced with supplies from MSDF ships. The concept for the area receiving support activities in 2001, when the law was enacted, did not match the reality of the situation.

From last August to today, warships of US, UK and other countries have been operating in three oceanic areas: CTF-150 in strategic waters outside the Persian Gulf; CTF-152 in the southern part of the Persian Gulf; and CTF-158 in the northern part. The MSDF insists it

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supplies only those US vessels engaged in CT-150 operations, and that it did not supply fuel to any US warship engaged in operations toward Iraq.

12) Defense Ministry corrects amount of ship-to-ship fuel to 800,000 gallons -- four times the volume mentioned in Diet reply in 2003

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 3) (Excerpts)  
September 22, 2007

In May 2003, then Defense Agency Director-General Shigeru Ishiba told the Upper House Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that the Maritime Self-Defense Force's supply vessel Tokiwa had indirectly provided 200,000 gallons of fuel to the USS Kitty Hawk in Feb. 2003 under the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law. In this connection, the Defense Ministry yesterday corrected the amount of fuel provided by the Tokiwa to 800,000 gallons, saying the government had made a mistake.

Back in 2003, the Tokiwa was suspected to have fueled the Kitty Hawk in deviation from the Antiterrorism Law since the Kitty Hawk was taking part in the Iraq war. But the government explained that the aircraft carrier consumed 200,000 gallons a day and that the fuel provided by Japan was not used for the anti-Iraq operation.

The main opposition Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto or DPJ) has been opposed to the law's extension, citing a lack of information. Extending the law will now become even more difficult. According to the Defense Ministry, the Maritime Staff Office mistook the amount of fuel for another vessel in storing data. The US supply vessel fueled by the Tokiwa provided the Kitty Hawk with 800,000 tons of fuel on the same day. All the fuel from the Tokiwa might have been indirectly provided to the Kitty Hawk.

The Defense Ministry has queried the US government about the Kitty Hawk's actions. The ministry has indicated that there was no problem with the Tokiwa's provision of fuel, saying the notes exchanged with the US limit Japan's fuel strictly to the antiterrorism operation and that such was confirmed by the receiving vessel in the Indian Ocean, as well.

13) DPJ's Hatoyama: "Japanese oil was used in Iraq war," reiterating opposition to extension of MSDF refueling mission

MAINICHI (Page 3) (Full)  
September 23, 2007

Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) Secretary General Yukio Hatoyama renewed his opposition to an extension of the refueling mission being carried out by the Maritime Self-Defense Force's (MSDF) based

on the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law yesterday. In a press conference in Tomakomai, Hokkaido, Hatoyama said: "Suspensions are growing that Japanese fuel provided to be used in the war in Afghanistan has been used in the Iraq war. The public will naturally react to the government's cooperation in the war while telling a lie."

The main opposition party intends to question the government regarding the possible linkage between the refueling operation and the Iraq war by invoking its administrative investigation right. Hatoyama said: "The environment has been arranged to prove it is proper for us to oppose the extension of the MSDF refueling

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mission.

In the press conference, Hatoyama also said that Administrative Defense Vice Minister Kohei Masuda had asked him to support the government's plan to extend the mission. Hatoyama quoted Masuda as saying: "Since Japan has said it would provide oil for Afghanistan, it is inconceivable that US warships that have received fuel from the MSDF have used it for other purposes."

14) Hatoyama reveals plan to grill government in Diet over corrected refueling amount

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)  
September 23, 2007

Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto or DPJ) Secretary-General Yukio Hatoyama held a press conference in Tomakomai City, Hokkaido, on Sept. 22. In it, touching on the Defense Ministry's correction of the amount of fuel provided to a US refueling vessel in the Indian Ocean, Hatoyama said: "The US vessels that received fuel (from the MSDF) in the name of the war on terrorism were suspected to have been used in the war in Iraq. (The Defense Ministry's correction) has made it clear that the allegation was probably a fact." He thus indicated that the largest opposition party would grill the government on the issue in the ongoing extraordinary Diet session.

15) George Washington to arrive at Yokosuka base on Aug. 19, 2008

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 3) (Abridged slightly)  
September 25, 2007

The USS George Washington, a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, is expected to arrive at the US Yokosuka Naval Base on Aug. 19, 2008, its new home port, according to Rear Adm. Richard Wren, the commander of the Japan-based aircraft carrier USS Kitty Hawk's battle group, in a press conference on Sept. 21.

According to Rear Adm. Wren, the Kitty Hawk will leave the Yokosuka base in May 2008, and hold a ceremony at the Pearl Harbor base in Hawaii to hand over duties to the George Washington. Part of the crewmembers of the two vessels will also be replaced.

Meanwhile, some 1,000 metropolitan area residents, mostly members of civic groups, have filed a class-action lawsuit seeking a provisional injunction to halt the construction work at the Yokosuka base, saying a nuclear accident would cause extensive damage to the area. Attention is focused on a court decision.

SCHIEFFER